

Innovations in Education

OVERVIEW

More than ever before, improving public education in Boston will require a united front by all. FY04 represents the third year of the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) five-year education reform plan, Focus on Children II, and perhaps its biggest challenge to date. The plan recognizes the goals and accomplishments made through the plan's predecessor, Focus on Children, and emphasizes six essentials of learning. The objective is to guide instructional practice to accelerate the rate of improved teaching and learning. Results thus far have been encouraging, but with difficult economic times and the loss of state aid, everyone involved in public education in Boston will have to redouble their efforts in order to continue Boston's rate of educational progress.

BPS Goals

In July 1996, the School Committee adopted Focus on Children, a comprehensive five-year education reform plan designed to serve as a blueprint for improvement throughout the system – from central offices to every classroom in every school.

Under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston School Committee and Superintendent Thomas W. Payzant, the Boston Public Schools set upon a course for continuous improvement. With the adoption of Focus on Children, the BPS community – educators, families, students, and private partners – sharpened its focus on the primary goal of improving teaching and learning in order to enable all students to achieve high standards of performance. This reform had a positive, measurable impact on public education in Boston. Test scores and other data show that Boston's schools and students demonstrated continuous improvement over the five-year period.

The many lessons learned through the Focus on Children plan are the foundation upon which the Focus on Children II plan was built. This plan maintains that if we persist in a thoughtful and unifying process of continuous improvement, we

will achieve the results we seek. Focus on Children II emphasizes whole school improvement, a collaborative process that leads to measurable improvement in student performance. It requires all stakeholders to look at a school's many challenges and opportunities not in isolation but in their entirety. The following six essentials highlight whole school improvement:

- Focus on literacy and mathematics;
- Use student work and data to identify student needs, improve instruction and assess progress;
- Focus professional development to give teachers and principals what they need to improve instruction in core subjects;
- Identify and replicate best practices for instruction;
- Align all resources with instructional focus; and
- Engage families, community and partners to support whole school improvement.

BPS Operating Budget

The FY04 BPS Budget represents an ongoing effort to align resources with educational priorities. While this budget does not reflect optimum funding for the Boston Public Schools, it does succeed in achieving an appropriate balance between our priorities for teaching and learning and the resources available. It continues to build on the previous years' progress by concentrating available resources at the school level in order to implement citywide learning standards and whole school change.

Balancing ambitious educational goals with finite resources is always difficult. The task of BPS in FY04 has been especially challenging because at the same time that improvements in teaching and learning are showing results, the revenues that support these improvements are constrained. However, reductions in service in certain areas have allowed BPS to reallocate resources to fund its most vital activities, those that support teaching and learning.

Included in the extremely difficult reduction decisions are cuts of over 850 positions, including over 425 teaching positions. This reduction in employee levels was driven by several key cost-cutting measures, including the following:

- Each of Boston's schools was required to take an 8% budget cut, excepting 4 schools that serve student populations with significant disabilities (where reductions would result in more expensive out-of-district placements).
- BPS conducted a comprehensive review of models of service delivery and efficiencies in central office budgets, which resulted in consolidation of services and reduction of positions. Central office budgets were ultimately reduced by 26%.
- Caseloads for Special Education support positions, including Evaluation Team Facilitators (ETFs), Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapists, have been increased resulting in a reduction in SPED support and clerical support positions, as staffing levels for clerical support are tied to the number of SPED support positions.
- BPS determined that 5 schools, 2 middle and 3 elementary, would close at the end of the FY03 school year. The School Committee approved a set of criteria to consider when recommending school closures including capital planning and programmatic considerations, enrollment and demographic information and potential cost savings. The City does not intend to sell any of these buildings at this time and has considered usage options for programs serving BPS students.

Despite these difficult choices, BPS has developed a plan for FY04 that succeeds in focusing resources on its most important priorities and allows it to move forward in several critical areas, including the following:

- BPS is opening three new state-of-the-art schools in September 2003, two middle schools and one K-8 school. Two of these will be the first new middle schools in Boston in thirty-five years. One of the middle schools and the K-8 school will function as Pilot Schools. Combined, these new schools will serve a total of 2,100 students.

- BPS is committed to the expansion of Tech Boston Academy. Tech Boston Academy served 74 students in FY03, all in grade 9. In FY04 grade 10 will be added, serving an additional 80 students.
- BPS is continuing progress in high school restructuring and establishing small learning communities.
- In response to the passage of Massachusetts ballot Question 2, BPS is purchasing textbooks and educational materials for English Language Learners in order to facilitate the implementation of English immersion as mandated by new regulations.
- BPS is continuing to focus resources on efforts to insure that the gains made in student achievement and in closing the achievement gap are sustained.

Prior to the FY04 budget formulation BPS built a competitive environment for transportation services beginning in FY04. This new competition among transportation providers has allowed avoidance of substantial increases in cost that would have resulted in even higher reductions than already reflected. BPS recognizes that transportation is a major expense and will renew its commitment to explore options that will allow for further transportation savings in future years.

The BPS FY04 budget is reflective of Mayor Menino's continued commitment to education. It ensures that even in times of fiscal distress, education remains a top priority for the City of Boston. In the years leading up to FY04, Boston has shown a true commitment to improving education.

The BPS FY03 Operating Budget of \$650.6 million showed a 1.7% increase over the FY02 expenditures of \$639.7 million. This represents a cumulative increase of \$242.5 million, or 59.4%, between FY94 and FY03. The FY03 BPS Budget was 43.6% of the total city departmental appropriations (excluding fixed costs).

The total city-funded FY04 BPS Operating Budget is \$646.1 million, representing a .7% decrease from FY03. The FY04 BPS Operating Budget is 43.9% of the total city departmental appropriations (excluding fixed costs) and represents a cumulative increase of \$238 million, or 58.3% between FY94 and FY04.

BPS STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment is the key driver of the BPS Budget. Allocations of resources at the school level are determined by the projected enrollment at each school for the next school year. These projections are distributed across all of the programs offered, across all grades, and at every school. As of December 2002, BPS had 62,102 students enrolled. This represents a decrease of 637 students from the 62,739 students enrolled in December 2001. Today's enrollment represents an increase of about 3.2% since FY94, or 1,912 students. (Figure 1.)

Enrollment projections for FY04 anticipate a slight decrease in the number of regular education students from December 2002 actual enrollment numbers, with special education also showing a slight decrease over the December actuals. Currently 75.5% of students are in regular education programs (including vocational and advanced work, and 502.1, 502.2, and 502.3 prototype mainstream special education), 14.6% are in bilingual education, and 9.9% are in substantially separate special education programs (502.4 prototype).

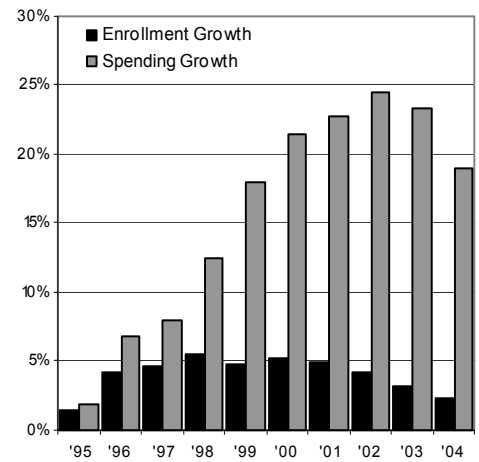
The approval of Massachusetts's ballot initiative Question 2 will radically change the provision of educational services to English Language Learners. As a result of Question 2, BPS is likely to see a substantial movement of students who had been educated in bilingual settings into the mainstream regular education population.

BPS seeks to ensure equal educational opportunities and prevent discrimination and inequalities based on racial, ethnic, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reasons. The student population is ethnically diverse. FY03 enrollment was 47% African-American, 29% Hispanic American, 14% Caucasian, 9% Asian American, and less than 1% Native-American.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Regular Education

Regular education is comprised of grades 1 through 12, kindergarten, and early learning opportunities. The programs offered range from



Cumulative School Enrollment Growth vs. Cumulative School Expenditure Growth
FY95- FY04. Adjusted to FY94 dollars

Figure 1

early learning and early education centers to high school programs, from classical education to technology, from social studies to international studies, and from advanced work classes to remedial and alternative education programs. Regular education students are often integrated with bilingual and special education populations. In addition, adult basic education and evening high school programs are available for Boston's adult population.

English Language Learners

In September 2002, the School Committee approved the Policy for English Language Learners (ELL). This policy remains in place with modifications that take into consideration the legal requirements of Question 2, which mandates that, with limited exceptions, all public school children in Massachusetts must be taught all subjects in English. In November 2002, BPS presented the first phase in the implementation of Question 2 to principals, headmasters and administrators. The phase-in process continues in areas such as definition of programs, waiver process, student and teacher assignment and professional development.

The Office of Bilingual Education and Language Service (OBELS) has redefined its mission to achieve a balance between focusing more deeply and systematically on the academic achievement of English Language Learners and compliance monitoring. OBELS is a project-based organization designed specifically to execute

effectively all aspects of Question 2 from research to implementation.

OBELS has developed a definition of all new programs for English Language Learners, which will be in place in September 2003. Work continues in the following areas:

- Implementation of the waiver section in Question 2 consisting of the definition and implementation of a waiver granting procedure at the BPS.
- Implementation of a professional development plan focused on preparing BPS staff to work with ELL's in programs specifically designed for English Language Learners and in general education.
- Workshops on the new Limited English Proficient (LEP), Testing Requirements for the MCAS, LAS (Language Assessment Scales) and MELA-O (Massachusetts English Language Assessment Oral). These workshops are part of the requirements of No Child Left Behind and Question 2.
- Assessment and identification of OBELS programmatic data needs in order to develop a comprehensive data collection plan to monitor the academic achievement of English Language Learners.
- Identification and purchase of instructional materials, texts, and visual aids for Sheltered English Instruction for the next academic year.
- Information packets for schools to share with parents to disseminate essential information to ELL parents regarding the restructuring of bilingual education.

Special Education

BPS provides special education services to approximately 12,300 students delivered in both public schools and special education private schools. Special Education teachers work with students with disabilities in meeting the goals and objectives of their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). In addition to BPS teachers, service providers, including speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and adaptive physical education teachers provide services as determined through the IEP process.

All special education services are provided in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts

General Laws, Boston School Committee policies, and specific requests related to the courts. To ensure equal access to all curricula in regular education, all teaching and learning experiences within the special education arena must be closely aligned with Citywide Learning Standards and Curriculum Frameworks.

In November 1998, the BPS Accountability Standards for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Mandate was first issued. The 2002 report shows clear progress in the area of referrals to special education as well as placements in out-of-district placements.

Currently approximately 17.7% of BPS students have Individualized Educational Plans. This represents a significant decrease from 22% in the 1997-1998 school year. The state average is 17%, while the national average for an urban city is 12-14%. Though considerable progress has been made in the area of referrals to special education as well as a reduction in the number of new students placed in out-of-district placements, the number of students placed in substantially separate settings (502.4 prototype students), requires continued and extensive focus.

Support Services

Students in all programs take advantage of the wide range of support services in the schools. School medical services, psychological services, guidance services and other support services are offered across all grade levels. Prudent deployment of this student support is designed to better the system's capacity to address the changing needs of students. In addition, collaborative arrangements with human services and community agencies supplement the support services offered to students and their families.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DESIGNS

Pilot Schools

Pilot schools were developed through the BPS/ Boston Teacher's Union (BTU) collective bargaining contract. Pilot schools are established through proposals submitted in a Request for Proposals process, in which at least one of the individuals submitting the proposal is a BPS staff member. The pilot schools are free from union

contract and School Committee rules and regulations.

Pilot schools can serve as useful examples of cutting-edge education practices. They provide a “laboratory” where innovative and exciting educational ideas can be developed and shared with the entire district. Pilot school students’ test scores have shown consistent improvement. However, not all educational methods are transferable to all classrooms. Managerial flexibility over staffing, budget, curriculum, use of time and governance allow pilot schools to innovate in ways that deepen what and how children learn.

The budget for each pilot school is based on the average per pupil grade level cost. The per-pupil cost allocated to the pilot schools includes all instructional, administrative and support services costs except for transportation and the cost of educating private placement students. The per-pupil cost of pilot schools students is part of the BPS Operating Budget.

Boston currently has the following eleven pilot schools: Fenway Pilot High School; Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School; Lyndon Pilot School; Greater Egleston Community High Pilot School; the Mission Hill Pilot School; Harbor Pilot School; New Mission High; Boston Arts Academy Pilot School; Quincy Upper Pilot School; Tech Boston Academy; and Boston Community Leadership Academy. Two additional pilot schools are scheduled to open in September 2003, New Boston Middle School and Orchard Gardens K-8.

There are approximately 3,000 students enrolled in Boston’s pilot schools during FY03. The FY04 projected enrollment for pilot schools is approximately 4,700.

Horace Mann Charter Schools

Two schools originally founded as pilot schools were designated as Horace Mann charter schools by the Board of Education in 1999. These two schools, the Health Careers Academy and the Boston Evening Academy are projected to serve 395 students in FY04.

A Horace Mann charter school represents all or part of a public school operated under a charter approved by the local school committee and local bargaining agent, granted by the State Board of

Education. A charter is granted for five years and is renewable. Educational assessments are conducted by the State, and charter schools are required to comply with state regulations on testing and assessments. All charter schools will be required to measure their progress against the goals set under their charter and make a formal annual report. In addition, there will be site visits to assess each charter school’s progress.

A Horace Mann charter school annually submits a budget request to the Superintendent and School Committee. The cost of Horace Mann charter schools is included in the BPS Operating Budget. A Horace Mann charter school shall not receive less than it would under the district’s budgetary allocation rules.

Commonwealth Charter Schools

Commonwealth charter schools differ from pilot schools and Horace Mann charter schools because the granting of their charter does not require the approval of the school committee or school unions, and they do not submit an annual budget request to the school committees. Commonwealth charter schools are public schools established by charters granted by the Board of Education independent of local school committees, in accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1993. The cost is borne by the sending district of the student attending the Commonwealth Charter School. The tuition costs for charter school students who live in Boston are paid for by the City of Boston, outside of the BPS Operating Budget.

In FY03 there are fifteen Commonwealth charter schools available to Boston’s students. The following twelve are located in the City of Boston: Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School, Boston Renaissance Charter School, City on a Hill Charter School, Conservatory Lab Charter School, Edward Brooke Charter School, Frederick Douglass Charter School, Codman Academy Charter School, Media & Technology Charter School, Neighborhood House Charter School, Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School and Uphams Corner Charter School. Boston students attend three Commonwealth charter schools located outside of Boston. They are Benjamin Banneker Charter School in Cambridge, Somerville Charter School in Somerville, and South Shore Charter School in Hull. Four additional Commonwealth

charter schools in Boston are scheduled to open in the fall 2003: Smith Academy Charter School, College Preparatory Charter School, Roxbury Charter High School and the Excel Academy Charter School. Boston students will also attend one additional charter school outside the City – Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in Malden. It is projected that 4,288 Boston students will be attending twenty charter schools in total in fall 2003.

Beginning in FY99, there was a change in the method of financing Commonwealth charter schools. In FY99, the state reimbursed 100% of the first year costs for new Commonwealth charter school students at new or existing Commonwealth charter schools, 60% of the students' second year costs, and 40% of their third year costs. The City of Boston is scheduled to assume the full tuition costs by the students' fourth year. Even though the charter school reimbursement law is still in effect, the State did not fund charter school reimbursement in FY03 nor has the Governor included any funding for charter school reimbursement in his FY04 State Budget (House 1). The House and Senate Ways and Means Conference Committee Budget includes some funding for Charter School tuition reimbursement but the City has chosen not to budget these funds fearing they will be vetoed and an override of that veto not sustained. Charter school costs for FY03 are projected to be \$35.9 million and projected to increase by an additional \$6 million to \$42.1 million in FY04.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

External Funds

Overall, BPS is projected to receive \$129.4 million in external funds in FY04. External funds are received through formula grants (entitlements), competitive grants, reimbursement accounts and other grants primarily from state and federal sources. Compared to FY03 funding, the projected amount for FY04 represents a decrease of approximately \$5.3 million or 3.9%.

External funds are important to the overall success of the Boston Public Schools and provide a source of funds that are targeted for specific purposes that enhance teaching and learning.

They are aligned with the general fund budget to support an all-funds approach to budgeting.

FY03 saw several changes in grants from the state due to revenue reductions and from the federal government related to changes in policy. State grant amounts continue to decline in FY04, with many projected to be completely eliminated.

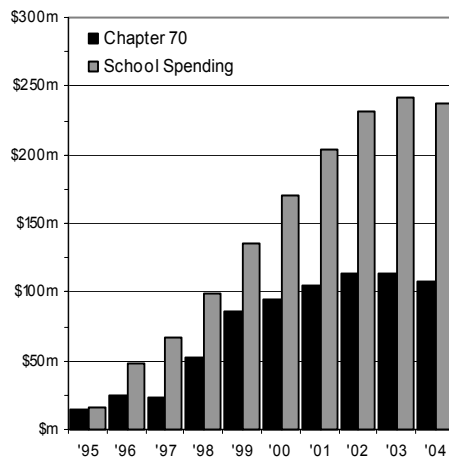
On the federal side, the current administration's No Child Left Behind policy, established during the cyclical reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), promises resources geared toward improving the quality of education for every child.

No Child Left Behind funds come with substantial new programmatic requirements. Its major concepts are better targeting of disadvantaged students, greater choice for parents, flexibility for states and districts, accountability, and scientifically based instructional strategies and academic content. No Child Left Behind also provides BPS with a number of new opportunities to compete for funds.

Chapter 70 Aid

The 1993 Education Reform Act is a multi-year commitment by the state to increase and equalize funding for local education. Since the FY94 state budget, the Education Reform Act's financing formula has affected the amount of education aid the City has received. It has also required the City to spend at or above the education maintenance of effort, which it has done. The City of Boston received \$66.6 million in FY94, \$81.6 million in FY95, \$92.1 million in FY96, \$115.5 million in FY97, \$143.9 million in FY98, \$178.2 million in FY99, \$186.2 million in FY00, \$197.5 million in FY01, \$205.6 million in FY02 and \$205.6 million in FY03.

Governor Romney's FY04 Budget (House 1) funds Boston's Chapter 70 Education aid at \$245.6 million – a 19% increase over Boston's FY03 Chapter 70 Education aid. The large increase is due primarily to two factors: (1.) the large decrease in Boston's municipal revenue growth factor (-4.27%) as a result of the cut in Boston's general government revenues – lottery and additional assistance; and (2.) the increase in foundation enrollment and in the foundation budget per pupil factors for low income students and special needs students resulting in an



Boston's Cumulative Chapter 70 Growth vs. Cumulative School Expenditure Growth

Figure 2

increased foundation budget. Any increase in Chapter 70 Education aid must be tempered by the cuts in Boston's general government local aid and the increase in Boston's charter school costs in FY04.

Private Partnerships

BPS has continued a long-running tradition of working with numerous independent organizations to help bring additional resources, expertise, and guidance to the youth of Boston and BPS students. It is an important goal of the School Department that each school will have established a partnership not only with a college or university, but also with a business or foundation, arts or cultural organization and health or human services provider.

Technology Initiative - Over 100 businesses have contributed in the form of direct partnerships with the schools and other forms of system-wide assistance.

ReadBoston Initiative - A partnership with city organizations committed to children's literacy, harnesses resources, innovative programs, books and best practices and devotes much time and energy to promoting literacy in Boston's elementary schools.

In addition to business partnerships, the BPS is the beneficiary of a consortium of higher education institutions. According to the Boston Higher Education Partnership, 28 colleges and universities have formed a consortium that provides the largest amount of funding and

services to a single urban school district in the entire country. This steadily increasing assistance comes in the form of scholarships, pro-bono assistance, and external grants.

In addition to college, university and business partnerships, BPS is also striving to strengthen partnerships with arts and cultural institutions and health and human services providers. According to the Boston Cultural Partnership, over 60 cultural organizations, ranging from internationally known cultural institutions to community-based organizations to individual artists, offer programs to 95% of Boston Public Schools. About 74% of the students served in these programs are at the elementary level.

Performance Indicators and Standards

Overview

An accountability process based on measurable outcomes has been in place for a number of years. The goal of this accountability process is to promote ongoing improvement in teaching and learning at each and every Boston Public School and in each and every classroom within these schools.

Adequate Yearly Process

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the district's role with respect to accountability has been redefined. Under NCLB, federal regulations define specific criteria for which schools will be held accountable and on which sanctions and/or rewards are based. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), mandated by the federal government, interpreted by the state, and measured by performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the statistic that defines whether or not a school is meeting an accountability standard. Thus AYP has been added as a new performance indicator.

NCLB requires public schools to inform parents if their child's school fails to make AYP for one or more cycles. A cycle is a two-year period over which MCAS performance is averaged. For schools not making AYP for both Cycles I (1999 and 2000) and Cycle II (2001 and 2002), parents must be notified that they can transfer their child to another school if space allows and that supplemental services will be available to children who need them. Additionally, BPS is expected to

take appropriate action to ensure improved student performance at these schools in future years. For schools not making AYP for Cycle II only, parents must be notified that they can transfer their child to another school if space allows and schools must perform appropriate actions to ensure improved student performance in subsequent years.

(Note: Performance Indicator & Standards data can be found in the Education chapter in Volume II of the City of Boston FY04 Budget.)

Daily Student Attendance

Student attendance is an indicator of student exposure to school instruction. Student attendance is a percentage calculated as the average daily attendance divided by the average daily membership based on data provided by each school to the Record Management Unit. The percentage is computed only from the particular grades in each school, excluding kindergarten. High student attendance is a basic requirement underlying school effectiveness, and the expectation is for student attendance to continuously improve.

Dropouts

According to state guidelines established in SY1991-92, students in grades 6-12 regardless of whether or not they are 16 years old, are counted as dropouts if they leave school during the year from July 1 to June 30 for any reason other than transfer, graduation, death, or expulsion with an option to return. This indicator applies primarily to high schools. The dropout rate is generally regarded as an index of a school's holding power, and the expectation is for the dropout rate to continuously decline. It should be noted that middle and high school refer to grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 respectively.

MCAS Tests: Distributions

The data present the percentage of students in each of four MCAS Performance Levels. Level 1 denotes "failing," Level 2 denotes "needs improvement," Level 3 denotes "proficient," and Level 4 denotes "advanced."

In the analyses of MCAS scores, percentages are based on the total number of students required to take the test. This includes regular students, students with disabilities tested with standard

accommodations, and Limited English Proficient students in the US for more than 3 years.

It is expected that percentages of students in Level 1 will continuously decrease and percentages of students in Levels 3 and 4 will increase.

During School Year 2001-2002, the MCAS was administered for the fifth time. English/Language Arts was administered in grades 4, 7, and 10 and Mathematics in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10. These tests have emerged from a provision in the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Students entering the 11th grade in the 2001-2002 school year are the first group required to pass the MCAS in high school as a graduation requirement.

(Note: the Science and Technology test was not administered in grades 4, 8, or 10 in SY01.)

Promotions

The promotion rate used in these analyses is intended to reflect achievement during the school year; therefore, it is calculated as the percentage of students promoted to the next grade as of June. It does not include those students who are promoted during the summer. Please note that elementary, middle, and high school refer to grades 1-5, 6-8, and 9-12 respectively. Promotions represent an achievement both for students and for their schools. It should be noted that the current more rigorous policy encourages an end to social promotions. It is expected that after an initial adjustment, promotion rates will continuously improve.

FORMAL BUDGET PROCEDURES

Governance

The seven-member Boston School Committee is appointed by the Mayor to staggered-terms and serves as the policy-making body of the Boston School Department. This structure was affirmed by the voters of the City of Boston in a referendum held in November 1996. The Committee appoints a Superintendent who serves as the chief executive officer of the Boston Public Schools. The Superintendent, responsible for management and supervision of the public schools, reports directly to the School Committee and also serves as a member of the Mayor's Cabinet. At each school, site councils have been established

consisting of the building administrator, parents, teachers, representatives of collaborating institutions and a student at the high school level. The council's role is to assist the principal or headmaster in decision-making processes.

The Operating Budget Process

The operating budget serves as an operational plan, stated in financial terms, for carrying out the goals of the school system. The operating budget is developed in accordance with the goals and objectives approved by the School Committee and extensive input from principals, headmasters, school site councils, the Superintendent's Leadership Team, and the larger school community. The budget reflects what the Boston Public Schools seek to achieve during the next fiscal year based on available resources.

The public school operating budget is developed under the following statutory schedule:

The Superintendent shall submit to the School Committee an annual operating budget for the next fiscal year by the first Wednesday in February.

The School Committee shall submit to the Mayor estimates of the next fiscal year's operating budget by the fourth Wednesday in February.

The School Committee may adopt, reject, reduce or increase any item in the Superintendent's recommended operating budget. If the School Committee fails to take action on the Superintendent's recommended operating budget by the fourth Wednesday in March, the budget recommended by the Superintendent shall be deemed as if approved by the School Committee.

After School Committee approval of the next fiscal year's annual budget, the Superintendent shall submit the budget to the Mayor who may approve or reduce the total recommended budget, but who may not allocate among expenditures.

The Mayor must submit the school's operating budget to the City Council for appropriation.

The City Council shall vote on the total amount of the appropriations requested by the Mayor, but neither the Mayor nor City Council shall allocate the appropriations among accounts.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The city's capital planning process supports the Mayor's commitment to education and ensuring Boston's educational facilities are equipped to meet the needs of the City's families. Between FY98 and FY02 capital expenditures for schools totaled \$311.8 million or 41% of total expenditures excluding spending on the new convention center. FY03 capital expenditures for the schools totaled \$71.2 million.

The FY04-08 capital plan includes \$286.7 million for school facilities and equipment. In FY04 \$51.2 million in new authorization is proposed. The proposed capital plan includes the following:

- Three new schools, a K-8 school at Orchard Gardens, a middle school at Columbia Road, and a middle school at Mildred Avenue opened in September 2003, providing 2,200 students modern state-of-the-art classrooms;
- Window replacements and masonry repairs will be completed at Boston Arts Academy;
- The design of fire alarm upgrades will be completed at seven schools;
- HVAC improvements will be completed at Madison Park High, Hamilton, Tynan and Umana Barnes;
- Masonry repairs at several schools including Dorchester High School;
- Construction for electrical and technology wiring upgrades at 16 schools.

In addition to these highlights, the capital plan includes additional maintenance projects for windows, roofs, and boilers at schools across the city. Project level detail on capital expenditures can be found in the Education section of Volume II of the FY04 Budget.

Capital investment in high schools has resulted, once again, in all schools either maintaining or improving their accreditation status in the last year.

The City has made strides towards achieving the Mayor's goal of adding technology throughout the schools. Complete electrical upgrades and technology wiring began in FY99. Today, all schools have received at least a minimum build out of classroom technology to make connections to the school network and the Internet. Some of

the technology work is discountable at a rate of 80-90% through the Federal Communications Commission Universal Service Fund.

Since FY97 the capital plan has funded a number of major accomplishments including:

- Upgrading or reaffirming full accreditation status for all the City's high schools;
- Becoming the first major urban public school district in the United States to have all schools wired to the Internet;
- Providing full electrical and technology wiring upgrades at 105 schools;
- Completing construction on 3 major high school renovations: Boston Latin, Hyde Park High and East Boston High;
- Opening the Boston Arts Academy and the Young Achievers Pilot School;
- Purchasing and beginning renovations to the Mission Hill School;
- Completing the revitalization of 55 schoolyards; and
- Constructing modular classroom facilities at the Quincy Upper Pilot School.

School Building Assistance

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts School Building Assistance (SBA) program, managed by the Department of Education (DOE), is designed to assist cities and towns in building new schools or in renovating existing ones. Under the current program the City is eligible for up to 90% reimbursement on approved project costs.

In July 2000, the state legislature repealed the former school construction aid program and enacted Chapter 70B of the General Laws. The range of reimbursement rates under Chapter 70B remains unchanged although the method of determining the appropriate rate is different. Previously, the reimbursement rate was fixed by statute for each city and town. Under the current law, a formula involving equalized property valuations, per capita income and the percentage of low-income students in the school district are the key factors. In addition, projects can earn additional incentive points for re-using existing buildings, providing adequate maintenance, using construction management firms or meeting energy efficiency standards. For the first five years of the Act, districts with approved desegregation plans

will have ten points added to their reimbursement rate, and for the five years following that, five points will be added.

Reimbursement payments are made over twenty years on a level payment basis. Reimbursement payments are made to the City's General Fund and are included as part of the annual State Aid package. In FY02 the State reduced its annual funding of this program from approximately \$50 million to \$20 million annually. Due to this change in funding the city now expects annual reimbursements for the three new schools to begin no earlier than FY07. Reimbursement payments due between FY04-FY08 are forecast at \$92.5 million.

In March 2003, the Governor instructed the DOE to give only the most urgent FY03 project applications preliminary approval for inclusion on the priority waiting list. In addition, the DOE was directed to place a moratorium on FY04 project applications while the department and legislature prepared a comprehensive approach to restructuring the SBA program. In April, the DOE notified the City that the Burke High School project was among twenty-eight projects state-wide given preliminary approval subject to two conditions: first, final municipal votes must be taken by June 30th and second, completed applications must be submitted to DOE by August 29th. As a consequence, the City passed a loan authorization in late June and filed a completed DOE project application in August. Funding for the Burke project depends on gaining SBA approval and timing of the construction project will be reviewed with respect to the availability of State reimbursement.

LINC Boston Technology Plan

The City of Boston and BPS have committed to wiring schools to the Internet, providing computer access in the classroom and supporting teacher's professional development to effectively use technology to support student learning. LINC2 (Learning and Information Network for the Community), the BPS's second five-year technology plan, articulates the use of technology to support Focus on Children II and the six essentials of Whole School Improvement as follows:

- To support literacy and mathematics instruction for all students, including SPED and bilingual, and to prepare students for higher education and for careers using technology.
- To retrieve and analyze data to assess student learning and improve instruction.
- To provide and document professional development for all staff as they improve their understanding of the power of technology to enhance and customize instruction.
- To facilitate the identification and sharing of best practices in instruction.
- To support the sharing and alignment of resources.
- To connect families and community with student learning.

LINC2 will also continue the goals of LINC1 as follows:

- Complete networks and electrical upgrades at all schools.
- Provide professional development so that all teachers will be able to use technology thoughtfully to support student learning.
- Integrate technology with Citywide Learning Standards.
- Provide appropriate support, maintenance and upgrades.

